

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

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INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

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TAGS: PINT ,PFOR, GY

SUBJECT: PPP ATTACKS COMPULSORY NATIONAL SERVICE DESPITE PLEDGE OF
CRITICAL SUPPORT

REF: (A) GEORGETOWN A-24 (B) GEORGETOWN 1323

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. SUMMARY: PPP ON AUGUST 31 BROKE FROM
RECENT ANNOUNCED POLICY OF CRITICAL SUPPORT OF PNC BY SHARPLY ATTACK-
ING PNC PLAN TO MAKE NATIONAL SERVICE COMPULSORY. PPP ALSO DELIB-
ERATELY TWISTED SUGAR TRIBUNAL AWARD TO SUPPORT ONE-WEEK SUGAR
STRIKE. END SUMMARY.

2. OPPOSITION MOSCOW-LINE COMMUNIST PEOPLES PROGRESSIVE PARTY
(PPP) ON AUGUST 31 BROKE ITS SILENCE ON PM BURNHAM'S ANNOUNCEMENT
AT PNC CONVENTION A WEEK EARLIER THAT PARAMILITARY NATIONAL SER-
VICE WOULD BE COMPULSORY. PRINCIPAL HEADLINE IN PPP'S DAILY MIRROR
READ "PPP CALLS ON GUYANESE TO OPPOSE COMPULSORY NATIONAL SERVICE".
ACCORDING TO PPP, ITS CONDEMNATION IS BASED ON:

A. COMPULSORY NATIONAL SERVICE WAS NOT AN ISSUE IN 1973

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ELECTIONS, HENCE THERE WAS NO CONSULTATION WITH GUYANESE PEOPLE.

B. PROPOSED COMPULSORY SERVICE TANTAMOUNT TO FORCED LABOR, SINCE IT IS NOT EXCLUSIVELY MILITARY TRAINING AND FURTHER MORE GUYANA FACES NO IMMEDIATE EXTERNAL THREAT.

C. COMPULSORY NATIONAL SERVICE IS BREACH OF GUYANA CONSTITUTION AND U.S. DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS. ENTRY TO CERTAIN JOBS AND INSTITUTIONS ALREADY MADE CONDITIONAL ON PRIOR NATIONAL SERVICE.

D. CONTENT OF NATIONAL SERVICE IS PRIMARILY PNC POLITICAL INDOCTRINATION, WITH LITTLE SKILL TRAINING INVOLVED.

E. NATIONAL SERVICE VIOLATES MORES AND CUSTOMS OF GUYANESE PEOPLE; FORCE AND COMPULSION WILL NOT END PRESENT WOUNDS IN GUYANESE SOCIETY.

3. PPP STATEMENT ALSO QUOTED CONDEMNATION OF COMPULSORY NATIONAL SERVICE BY LIBERATOR PARTY MOSLEM AND HINDU ORGANIZATIONS, AND GUYANA COUNCIL OF INDIAN ORGANIZATIONS. FURTHERMORE, FIELDEN SINGH, LEADER OF OFFICIAL PARLIAMENTARY OPPOSITION, MODERATE UNITED FORCE, AND HAD LAST WEEK CRITICIZED BURNHAM'S ANNOUNCEMENT TO PNC AND CALLED ON PPP TO CLARIFY ITS POLICY ON COMPULSORY NATIONAL SERVICE. END UNCLASSIFIEDM

4. COMMENT: THOUGH PM BURNHAM HAD MONTHS AGO ANNOUNCED THAT NATIONAL SERVICE WOULD QUOTE EVENTUALLY UNQUOTE BE COMPULSORY (REF A) ANNOUNCEMENT AT AUGUST PNC CONGRESS, WHILE STILL VAGUE ON TIMING, WAS PERCEIVED WITHIN AND WITHOUT PNC AS MOVING COMPULSORY FEATURE TO WITHIN NEXT YEAR OR TWO, PERHAPS WITH SELECTION BY LOT UNTIL ADEQUATE FACILITIES FOR ALL ARE CONSTRUCTED. OPPOSITION TO PROPOSED COMPULSORY FEATURE IS STRONG IN MAJORITY EAST INDIAN SEGMENT AND IN MIDDLE CLASS OF SOCIETY REGARDLESS OF RACE, PARTLY BECAUSE COMPULSORY FEATURE WOULD APPLY TO WOMEN AS WELL AS MEN. ONE MOSLEM LEADER WHO CLAIMS TO HAVE RECENTLY OBTAINED GRANTS OF SEVERAL THOUSAND DOLLARS FROM GOVT OF SAUDI ARABIA FOR RELIGIOUS PURPOSES TOLD ME HIS ASSOCIATES WERE MOBILIZING GUYANA MOSLEM COMMUNITY TO REQUEST SAUDI AND OTHER CONSERVATIVE ARAB DIPLOMATIC STATES TO INTERVENE WITH GOG OVER THIS ISSUE ON GROUNDS OF INFRINGEMENT ON MOSLEM RELIGIOUS BELIEFS REGARDING TREATMENT OF WOMEN. AS FIRST STEP, HE PLANS TRAVEL TO CARADAS TO PUSH THIS REQUEST WITH SAUDI EMBASSY THERE.

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5. THIS ATTACK ON A BASIC FEATURE OF PNC PROGRAM TO TRANSFORM GUYANA INTO MARXIST-LENINIST STATE CAME ON HEELS OF DELIBERATE PPP PROPAGATION OF ERRONEOUS INTERPRETATION OF RECENT SUGAR TRIBUNAL AWARD SO AS TO PROMOTE STRIKE WHICH CLOSED DOWN GUYANA SUGAR INDUSTRY MOST OF LAST WEEK. FYI: ON SEPT 3 STRIKE HAD BEEN CALLED OFF AS DISCUSSION UNDER WAY BETWEEN MINISTRY OF LABOR AND PPP-LINKED GAWU UNION. END FYI. POSSIBLE PARTIAL MOTIVATION FOR THESE ACTIONS BY PPP IS FACT THAT JAGAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT THAT

IT WOULD GIVE CRITICAL SUPPORT TO PNC GOVT (REF B) IS ALREADY
RUNNING INTO CONSIDERABLE GRASS ROOTS OPPOSITION IN MAJORITY EAST
INDIAN SEGMENT OF POPULATION, AT LEAST ONE PPP LEADER PUBLICLY
STATED THAT HE WAS DROPPING OUT OF POLITICS UNTIL JAGAN SIGNIFIED
HE WOULD NOT PURSUE CRITICAL SUPPORT. THAT OPPOSITION TO "CRITICAL
SUPPORT" FROM WITHIN THE PPP'S EAST INDIAN BASE COMBINED WITH THESE
TWO SIGNIFICANT EXAMPLES OF ANTI-PNC TACTICS AS USUAL CAST DOUBT
ON THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE NEW POLICY WILL BE IMPLEMENTED BY THE
PPP. OF COURSE, THE PPP COULD OCCUPY ITS 14 SEATS IN PARLIAMENT
WHICH IT WON IN 1973 ELECTION WITHOUT TONING DOWN ITS CRITICISM.
THUS FAR, HOWEVER, DESPITE SPECULATION THAT HE WILL DO SO,
JAGAN HAS NOT MADE ANY CLEAR MOVE TOWARD RE-ENTERING PARLIAMENT.
PARLIAMENT
MATTHEWS

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